

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

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TOMORROW'S SUPERMARKET



Volume 11, Number 1

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Cover Page

Based on marketing research conducted today, tomorrow's supermarket promises advanced techniques in preparing, moving, displaying, and ordering food—and reasonable prices for the consumer. See *Tomorrow's Supermarket—What's in It for the Consumer?* page 8.

ORVILLE L. FREEMAN
Secretary of Agriculture

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Let's Close the Nutrition Gap

By George L. Mehren
Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

It seems that not all, or even most, of the malnutrition in this country is caused by low income. Only 50 to 60% of us have fully adequate diets.

(Condensation of an address before the 1965 meeting of the National Association of Food Chains, in Washington, D.C.)

IN A COUNTRY which has the best, most abundant, most varied, and—in real terms—cheapest supply of food in all the world, you would think that every citizen would be well, or at least adequately, nourished.

But the fact is that only 50 to 60 percent of American households have diets that fully meet the standards set for adequate nutrition by the National Research Council. Among our low-income population an estimated 70 to 75 percent have diets that are deficient in one or more respects.

What are we doing about this?

So far as low-income families are concerned, we are making progress. The Food Stamp Program administered by the Consumer and Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which makes it possible for such families to stretch their food buying power with the help of Federal funds, is growing rapidly. By the end of 1965, it was helping more than 800,000 people in 191 areas to improve their diets. Over the next several years, we expect to be able to make the Food Stamp Program available everywhere it is needed—and wanted.

Meanwhile, the distribution of surplus foods remains a good, helpful program for thousands of low-income households. We have greatly improved the volume and variety of foods that are donated through this program. As a result, and because of the growing recognition of the importance of improved nutrition in building the health and vigor of disadvantaged people, this program has been growing, too. During a peak

period in 1965, it was operating in more than 1900 counties and cities throughout the country—more than ever before in the 30-year history of the program.

The National School Lunch Program is another means of improving the nutritional well-being of our people—our future citizens. Some 18 million children this year are eating well-balanced lunches (meeting at least one-third of their daily nutritive requirements) in school cafeterias operating under this program. More than 3 billion lunches will be served during this school year—10 percent of them free to children whose parents are unable to pay.

These figures are impressive—but we still have some serious gaps. More than 9 million children do not have access to any type of school feeding program—and nearly a million of them are children of poverty who would qualify for a free meal if it were available. Another half-million children attending schools which do have a lunch program should be, but are not, getting free lunches—the schools just don't have the resources even with Federal and State help, to provide them.

Federal, State, and local officials are working hard to close these unfortunate gaps in the school lunch program, but much of the solution will depend upon local action. Federal funds and foods usually account for only about 20 percent of the cost of the lunches. Money made available to schools under the Aid to Education Act, however, will help some of them to build needed kitchens and lunchrooms. And special assistance will go to some from the \$2 million fund that Congress appropriated in 1965 specifically to aid in financing lunches for poor children. We will continue to work toward the goal of making a school lunch available to every child in this

country regardless of his family's income or his neighborhood.

The school lunch program has a long-range nutritional value, as well as the short-range one of helping to build strong bodies and alert minds in today's youngsters. The long-range value is the good eating habits that are taught through this program. We expect the children who take part in this program to grow up with a knowledge of *why* they should eat well and *what* makes up a balanced diet.

This knowledge—we have only recently come to realize—is something a great many adults do not have. It would seem that not all, or even most, of the malnutrition in this country is caused by low income. Much of it is caused simply by ignorance. People just don't know what kinds of foods are necessary for good health and vigor—nor do they understand the importance of a good, well-balanced diet.

It is apparent that we need to launch a vigorous, nationwide nutrition education program.

We are already reaching many children through the school lunch program—and we hope to reach a great many more. And we are already carrying on extensive nutrition education work in connection with the food stamp and food distribution programs.

But we also need to reach the rest of our people—the middle- and upper-income groups, the young married people, and the old folks. We must get to them, somehow, the basic information on nutrition that they need to help themselves achieve and maintain good health and vitality.

It is important that we close the nutrition gap that separates what we are as a people from what we might be. It is important for the good of our Nation—today and for the future.

Do Food Stamps Really Make a Difference?

A case study of a Washington, D.C., family of 12, with a monthly income of about \$200, shows that they do indeed

WHEN IT COMES to helping a low-income family eat better and thus live better—does the Food Stamp Program really make a difference? Reports of a case study by Washington, D.C. dietitians-in-training indicate that food stamp coupons, plus some friendly and practical help from people who know the ropes of budgeting and food planning, can bring about remarkable improvements in family nutrition and family morale.

Before the Food Stamp Program came to their city, Mr. and Mrs. A and their 10 children voluntarily became the subjects of a special nutrition project undertaken by two young dietitians at Freedmen's Hospital, Washington, D.C., as part of their internship training. In a series of visits to the home in a low-rent public housing project, the dietitians learned that the A family of 12 lives on a monthly income of around \$230, the amount of Mr. A's wages. The father went as far as the seventh grade in school, and the mother completed the fourth grade.

Needless to say, the young dietitians found the A's diet sadly lacking in all the important food values needed by a growing family. Perhaps other values were slighted too, because Mrs. A said the family almost never sat down together for their two meals a day. Breakfast was generally missed by all.

Gradually the girls entered into the lives of the A family as they made repeated visits, phone calls, and even accompanied Mrs. A on shopping trips to the food store.

Real progress toward a better diet was slow until the Food Stamp Program became available and the A family was certified to participate. The dietetic interns worked over the family budget with Mrs. A and showed her how she could come up with the \$90 needed to invest in food stamp coupons for a family of 12. This investment represented a normal food expenditure of less than 30 cents a person a day. Her return was \$150 worth of coupons, which could be spent for food at any store authorized by C&MS to accept the coupons. By rearranging her budget, Mrs. A had been able to increase her food money by two thirds.

"When you've got all those coupons at once after having so little to eat, there's an enormous temptation to go on a real spending and eating spree", the interns said of Mrs. A's reaction to her new-found buying power. But with the help of her young advisors, Mrs. A carefully plotted her food plans for the month, dividing her coupons into four equal portions to insure that the family would eat well right through the final week.

The young dietitians taught Mrs. A to watch the food pages for good buys, plan her menus for the coming week, then go shopping. They presented Mrs. A with suggested menus and a file of low-cost, easy-to-prepare recipes, that were adjusted, as the project went along, to suit the family's tastes.

Now, with food stamp coupons, the A's could provide more of the foods they and their children really needed—fresh milk, fruits and vegetables and meat. Their diet improved steadily until, towards the end of the 4-month project, a dietary survey showed that the nutritional status of every family member

had improved substantially, especially in total food energy, protein, vitamin A and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). With continued help the A family would continue their strides toward an adequate diet.

Family A was now getting a breakfast of eggs, cereal and milk plus a good lunch and dinner. Mrs. A arranged a special eating area, so that for several meals during the week the family could sit down and eat together. Symbolic of the effect of better food on family morale was a fresh coat of paint on the living room wall. Mr. A had been able to stretch their limited budget for a can of paint to brighten up their apartment for the visiting dietitians.

In concluding the first phase of the experimental case study, the dietetic interns were satisfied that their work had paid off. The family had made strides in bettering their meal-planning and food-buying habits. The interns recommended that the project be continued and expanded to help the A's and others like them to achieve more adequate diets.



These two student dietitians from Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., helped to stretch the food stamp dollar of this lady's family by two-thirds thru budgeted buying and eating.

ONE OF THE WEEKLY MENUS PREPARED FOR "FAMILY A" . . .

bringing them closer to an adequate diet

Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Pancakes Syrup Bacon Fried eggs Milk	Corn flakes Bananas Milk Toast	Eggs Bacon Toast Milk	Orange juice Cooked wheat cereal Milk Toast	Orange juice Cris Eggs Toast Milk	Tomato juice Oatmeal Milk Toast	Orange juice Scrambled eggs and cheese Biscuits Milk
Peanut butter sandwich Tomato juice	Navy bean soup Grilled cheese sandwich Milk Fruit	Frankfurter Macaroni and cheese Green beans Fruit-gelatin	Homemade soup Peanut butter & jelly sandwich Oatmeal cookies Milk	Grilled cheese sandwich Oatmeal cookies Milk	Frankfurter Pork and beans Fruit-ade	Savory beans with meat balls Celery Fruit
Fried Chicken Fresh green peas Potato salad Hot rolls Milk	Tuna noodle casserole Tossed salad greens Applesauce	Fried liver Rice Canned tomatoes Shredded lettuce Fruit Milk	Meat loaf Rice Peas Fruit gelatin	Barbecued lamb Mashed potatoes Carrots Peach cobbler	Fried fish Rice Green beans Milk	Smoked sausage Macaroni salad Rice and raisin pudding Milk

MORE PRODUCE FLYING TO MARKET

CROSS-COUNTRY and foreign markets are just hours away from where fresh fruits and vegetables are produced, now that jet air transportation has entered into food marketing.

U.S. Department of Agriculture figures show that 1136 carlots of fresh fruits and vegetables moved by air from California during the first nine months of 1965. That's a 60 percent increase over the same period of 1964.

And prospects are brightening for still further growth in air shipments of these commodities—with accompanying expansion in worldwide markets—as cargo rate reductions occur.

Market reports of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service regularly show the volume of fresh fruits and vegetables moving to market by air. Strawberries, the Federal-State reports show, have led in volume—with shipments going to distant United States and European markets.

During the entire 1965 season ending in November, air shipments of strawberries exceeded 1100 carlot equivalents. This represented more than one-fourth of the total volume shipped out of California during the year and is about 50 percent more than the 746 carlots tallied in 1964.

Fifty-five percent of the airborne strawberries have been destined for Chicago and New York, some of which were redistributed to other markets, such as Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Upstate New York, and New England points.

Of the European markets, Frankfurt, Germany, took the greatest quantity—a half million pounds from January through September of 1965. That's more than five times the amount of strawberries air-shipped to Frankfurt during the same period of 1964.

Now, let's look at other kinds of California fresh fruits and vegetables shipped by air. A total of 169 carlots

were flown to markets through the end of September in 1965. Here's the breakdown by commodity: cherries, 28 carlots; asparagus, 8; figs, 35; grapes, 10; lettuce, 15; oriental vegetables, 38; nectarines, 2; peaches, 6; raspberries, 16; and cherry tomatoes, 11.

The total is about 2½ times more than the 74 carlots of fresh fruits and vegetables (excluding strawberries) air-transported from California during January-September of 1964.

The potential the jet age offers for swiftly moving perishable foodstuffs to far-off markets could, if reached, substantially alter present patterns of marketing fresh fruits and vegetables. More of these products could be made available in areas of the country and the

rest of the world where they are uncommon or sold only during certain times of the year.

Larger cargo planes will invite larger and more frequent shipments, particularly if rates are scaled downward as the size or weight of shipments becomes larger.

Most promising prospects for accelerated growth are seen in the new transatlantic rate structures recommended by the International Air Transport Association.

Airlines lowered their export rates for strawberries September 1, 1965. And reductions for air shipments of other fresh fruits and vegetables to European countries become effective January 1, 1966.

The January 1 rate change reduced former rates by 12 percent from New York to Stockholm, 22 percent to Copenhagen and Frankfurt, 30 percent to London, and 26 percent to Paris. Minimum weights for shipping these commodities are being cut in half on January 1, too—from 2200 to 1100 pounds.

The airlines and the U.S. fruit and vegetable industry have a big order ahead in taking advantage

of the full potential that air transportation offers. Each, of course, has a goal. For the airlines, it's *more freight business*—particularly outside the tourist season. For the produce industry, it's the *market expansion* that can result from making top quality naturally ripened perishables quickly available to distant consumers.

But each goal complements the other. And as each industry works in harmony with the other to overcome obstacles, we should see a steady rise in the volume of produce flying to market.

(The author is Chief of the Market News Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, C&MS., USDA.)



By John L. Buntin

how to handle

By Harry L. Williams

Your Livestock Claims Under the P&S Act

SUPPOSE YOU'RE a Midwestern cattle feeder, with 50 head of fed steers ready for market.

You contact a livestock commission firm and make arrangements for the sale of your cattle. You ship the 50 steers to the market.

A few days later, you receive your account of sale—and a check in payment for 48 steers.

At the going market for the grade and weight of cattle you shipped, you figure you've been "short-changed" by about \$500.

Could be there's been a clerical error. Or a couple of your steers may have been lost. They might have been mixed in accidentally with another lot at the stockyard.

In any case, you're short \$500 you can't afford to lose.

While we're only supposing, these circumstances are fairly typical of some of the thousands of reparation claims filed under the Packers and Stockyards Act with the U.S. Department of Agriculture every year.

That \$500 in our hypothetical case could easily have been a part of the more than \$5.4 million worth of claims the Packers and Stockyards Division of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service has helped the livestock industry recover in the past five years.

The Packers and Stockyards Act, the Federal trade statute which regulates those engaged in interstate livestock and poultry marketing and meat packing, makes specific provisions for USDA to assist claimants in recovering losses sustained in marketing transactions.

The Act provides—in general—that anyone who suffers a financial loss in dealing with a livestock dealer, market agency, or stockyard owner, may file a reparation claim.

A claim may be based on the unjustified failure of a dealer or market agency to pay you for your livestock, their charging you an unreasonable or discriminatory sales commission or other marketing fee, their improper handling or loss of your livestock, their accounting to you on the basis of inaccurate weights, or "anything done or omitted to be done" that causes you a financial loss.

Any of these same practices could also cause the P&S Division to issue a

formal administrative complaint for violations of the P&S Act. If a dealer fails to pay for livestock, for example, and the P&S Division can prove it in an administrative disciplinary proceeding, USDA may order the dealer to cease and desist from the violation and perhaps suspend his registration to do business under the P&S Act. But disciplinary actions and reparation proceedings are handled as two separate matters.

Filing a reparation claim is not, in itself, any guarantee that you'll recover your loss. But it is a first step toward doing so, and it affords you one immediate advantage. It puts the P&S Division's staff of trained and experienced marketing specialists and auditors at your disposal. They'll do everything possible to establish a factual report of the circumstances surrounding your claim.

And all it costs you is the time it takes to file the claim and describe the transaction.

You'll have to file your claim, in writing, within 90 days after your loss occurs. And you'll need to give the P&S Division's area supervisor all the information you can about the transaction—the names of the people and firms involved, the date and place of the transaction, the dates your livestock was shipped, received, and weighed, and a brief explanation of how you arrived at the amount of damages you're claiming. The more information you can provide, the better the chances of proving your case.

About 90 percent of the nearly 6,000 claims filed over the past five years have been settled informally. That is, the local P&S supervisor has been able to bring together the parties involved for an informal discussion of the claim. The facts have been established, the extent of the damage determined, and, in many cases, the claim has been settled on the spot. This procedure has been used in all claims against meat packing firms, since the P&S Act contains no specific provisions for formal reparation claims against packers.

These informal settlements have resulted in the recovery of more than \$4.8 million worth of claims since 1961.

If the claim can't be settled informally, it may be docketed with USDA as a formal reparation proceeding. The P&S

supervisor will forward his investigative report, containing all the known facts, to the Division's Washington headquarters. The complaint and report are then served on the respondent, or defendant, in the action.

If the respondent fails to answer the complaint within 20 days, he is considered to have admitted the facts in the complaint. USDA's Judicial Officer—acting for the Secretary of Agriculture—will issue an order directing the respondent to pay the claim.

If the respondent does answer the complaint, and denies the charges, a hearing will be set for the case. A USDA presiding officer will hear testimony from the complainant and the respondent, and rule on the merits of the claim, much the same as a judge rules in a civil court case.

It's important to remember that if the case does come to a hearing, you must be prepared to present and prove your own case. P&S Division personnel cannot "prosecute" the case for you. They may be called upon by the presiding officer to clarify evidence introduced, but they cannot take sides with either party in the proceeding. If your case involves any substantial amount of money, it's not a bad idea to hire an attorney.

If the presiding officer finds, on the basis of the hearing record, that you have a valid case, he will recommend to the USDA Judicial Officer that an order be issued awarding you damages.

In many cases, claims are paid on the basis of these reparation orders—but even such an order is still no guarantee that you'll recover your loss. The P&S Act makes no provisions for the enforcement of a reparation order.

So what's the use of going through the reparation proceeding if USDA still can't get your money for you?

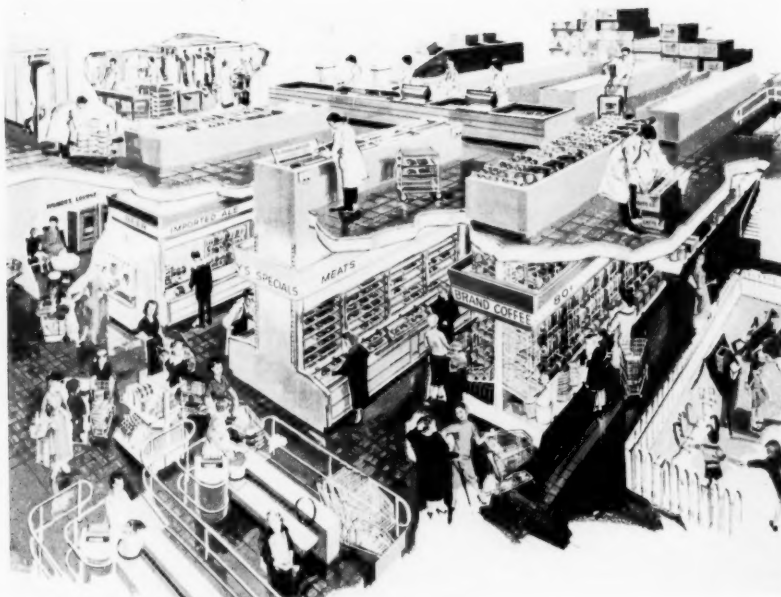
Again, there's one immediate and material advantage. If you do have to take your case to a civil court of law to collect for your damages, the USDA Judicial Officer's ruling constitutes *prima facie* evidence in the case. In other words, you don't have to go to the trouble and expense of building your case "from the ground up" as you would have had to do if you'd gone to court in the first place. The court will accept the record of the reparation proceeding as already-established finding of fact.

(continued page 15)

Tomorrow's Supermarket

By Raymond W. Hoecker

What's in it for the Consumer?



CONSUMERS NOW spend a smaller percentage of their income for food than ever before—18.5 percent of their take-home pay. In the years ahead will they continue to enjoy the same reasonable prices?

Yes, if tomorrow's supermarkets hold the line on rising costs by preparing, moving, displaying, and ordering food by techniques now being studied by marketing researchers in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Tomorrow's supermarkets will devote a larger proportion of their space to display and elbow room for consumers. Most of the backroom area in individual supermarkets where food is prepared for display will be eliminated, because food preparation can be performed better at a central building serving several supermarkets.

If the amount of shopping space were not increased and the backroom area were simply eliminated, construction costs could be reduced about \$10,000 per store, according to estimates made by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. And nearly \$15,000 could be saved in equipment that would not be needed for preparing meat and pre-packaging produce.

Centralized meat and produce preparation would employ equipment that isn't economical in individual stores, but which is cheaper to use on a large-scale centralized operation. Higher labor productivity could also be expected by centralizing operations. Workers who prepare food for display could concentrate on these duties instead of dividing their time among additional retailing chores.

Produce clerks would no longer have to spend up to half their time trimming, packaging, and pricing food. Even more time would be saved by clerks in the meat department. And other clerks could save up to a fifth of their time for other work by better shelf stocking techniques and by handling groceries that arrive at the store with prices already marked.

Consumers will find, according to the marketing specialists' crystal ball, that retail clerks will be able to give shoppers more attention, better merchandising, and will cater to demands for special purchases. More highly trained meat clerks will offer the personal services that the butcher in the old-fashioned store gave shoppers, such as cooking

suggestions and advice on the best meat buy.

Food that consumers buy in stores that are part of a centralized system could be packaged more attractively, with less waste, a longer shelf life, and better quality. These advantages of centralized handling systems would result from better use of scientifically controlled sanitation, refrigeration, and grading systems.

Such quality controls also contribute to lower costs. Central bagging, tray-packing, and associated costs of handling produce would be about a third less than when these operations are done in the retail store. Related costs for centralized meat packaging would be about 40 percent lower than at the retail level.

Consumers may find their favorite brand or product less likely to be out of stock than it is today, because electronic inventory management will keep closer tabs on supplies. At the check-out counter, shoppers' purchases will be noted electronically and orders relayed automatically for additional supplies when the equipment's electronic brain calculates supplies of any item are getting low.

One of the happiest changes in the supermarket of tomorrow, for many consumers, will be improvements in the checking-out process. Some of the ring-up and bagging details can be speeded by automation. Time can also be saved by reserving certain counters for customers who pay in cash, and using other counters for the expected increasing number of shoppers who will pay by credit card.

Check-out lines may also move faster as more homemakers take jobs and as more families move into apartments. These people usually make smaller purchases than other shoppers. They also buy more convenience foods, delicatessen items, and other prepared foods. Tomorrow's supermarket will be better equipped to serve these customers.

This glimpse into the future isn't so startling when we consider how far we have already come from the old country general store. Some of the foreseen changes are already underway. ARS marketing specialists are studying other changes to help avoid costly errors as stores experiment with food retailing methods to fit times in which man plans to visit the moon.

Dr. Hoecker is Chief, Wholesaling and Retailing Research Branch, Transportation and Facilities Research Division, ARS, Hyattsville, Md.)



POVERTY WAR GETS NEW WEAPON

WHAT DO YOU say to a man who is strong and eager to work but can't because there are no jobs? How do you console a mother sick of heart because her children are hungry and poorly clothed? How do you visualize poverty?

The real tragedy is that it usually hits those who can least endure it—those with large families, with little education, with nothing to fall back on, no one to lean on.

Their hopes are pinned on the War on Poverty. New weapons are used—hot lunches for underprivileged school children; food stamps for the needy; job training for those whom society has passed by; child care and training for the victims of unhappy homes.

In North Carolina, another new weapon successfully completed its field test last summer. It was used specifically in two communities in the Tarheel State—Moncure and Pantego. Both communities suffer from the same ailments—lack of work and lack of money to foster additional jobs. Seventy to eighty percent of the families of these communities live in poverty.

About 150 families live in Moncure located in Chatham County about 20 miles southwest of Raleigh. They work wherever they can find a job—in the pulpwood plants, or in the poultry plants, growing small patches of corn or a little wheat. Once a year these people have an opportunity to leave their community and hire themselves out during the tobacco harvest. In recent years even this work has been dwindling. Many of the families have been forced off their land and into the cities in search of a decent living. They know that the chances of a farmer finding work in already over-crowded cities are limited, but imagine their future on the farm promises even less.

Pantego is located about 150 miles northeast of the State capitol—a cluster of small farms snuggled amidst giant farms that have been reclaimed from the swamps and turned into prosperous agri-industries. Wooden shacks dot the Pantego roadsides irregularly—all dark-

ashen, near-black from weather, with tin roofs rusted brown. Most of them are abandoned, some are still occupied and mail boxes perched on long poles help the postman distinguish between them.



Cucumbers, like these awaiting pickup, have lately come to mean income for two poverty-stricken N.C. communities. Matched funds helped make it possible.

The War On Poverty has been raging in these areas for some time. The new weapon added to its arsenal was designed and financed by the North Carolina and U.S. Departments of Agriculture through the Matching Fund Program of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service. This weapon is cucumbers—an additional crop inserted into the farm rotation just before the tobacco harvest when the farmers normally have little else to do.

North Carolina is one of the largest producers of cucumbers in the U.S.

But in these two communities they are relatively unknown. Moncure had one brief experience. Some years ago a processor talked some of the farmers into growing cucumbers "guaranteeing" he would buy them at harvest time. His failure to buy them left very bad feelings in the community. Since that time, however, the State legislature had taken steps to prevent a recurrence. Before a processor can contract with a farmer to grow a commodity, he must first have a written contract approved by the State, and he must post a performance bond to insure his compliance.

This ruling is the foundation of the new program which is based on a contractual relationship between the processor and the farmer. Euris Vanderford of the Markets Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture was given the two-pronged responsibility of finding firms interested in the program and finding farmers willing to grow cucumbers.

As the program developed, an out-of-state processor firm agreed to a contract which set forth the acreage to be planted in the community and the prices he would pay for the various grades of cucumbers. The processor furnished the seed he wanted planted and the farmers paid for it when they sold their crops.

Since most of the farmers in these areas had never grown cucumbers before, experts from the State Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina State University met with the farmers to explain in detail the steps they should take. They showed slides and distributed handouts giving complete instructions on preparing the soil, spacing the plants, the fertilizers to use, the insects and diseases to look out for, and when to pick.

To handle the administrative duties on the local level, a station agent was selected from each of the communities. His job was to go into the community and make contracts with the individual farmers and, at harvest time, represent the processing firm as buyer. Aside from being a leader in the community the sta-

tion agent was required to have the facilities for grading—a shed and a set of scales. The firm furnished the mechanical grader. Farmers took their “cukes” to the agent’s shed where they were weighed and put through the grader. The agent then wrote checks, right on the spot, in payment to the farmers. At the end of the day, trucks hustled the day’s take to the processing plant.

Cucumbers are highly perishable—they must be picked at just the right size and delivered that same day. It may take several weeks for a farmer to harvest his entire crop this way. Consequently, the daily loads the farmers took to the station were not very large. The average size of the checks written by the agent was about \$35. The station agent worked full time for about six weeks, for a weekly salary and a commission based on the number of cucumbers that passed through him.

R. G. “Gabe” Bryant was the station agent for the Moncure project. Since 1947 he has been the leader in the community. That’s why he was selected for this position in the program. Under Gabe’s leadership the community had developed into a cooperative, close-knit organization that has done a great deal to improve the lot of its residents.

Bryant had little trouble selling the cucumber program to the Moncure farmers. “Everybody was real pleased,” Gabe remembered. “It offered them a cash market and they were interested right off.” Gabe got about 125 acres under contract—averaging about one acre per family. Generally, an acre of cucumbers will gross anywhere from \$400 to \$600. As Gabe said, “The folks that didn’t make much money this year see how to do better next year. Right now it looks like we will have

about 200 acres contracted for next season.”

Laura Lee is a neighbor of Gabe’s. She and her husband planted one acre and made \$400. “It was just a wonderful thing for us,” she said. “It came at just the right time—between getting other crops off to market.” Laura saw another advantage, “It’s something the children can help with,” she said. “It helps them learn to make their own way. When you don’t have work for the children on the farm, you have trouble,” she added.

Laura realized she didn’t do as well with her crop as she could have. “Next year we could take half the ground and get the same amount of cucumbers. We could have made \$600 if we had picked every day. But, you learn by doing,” she added philosophically. “It was wonderful for us.”

William Slade, the Pantego station agent, also thought the program was excellent. “It’s the only way the small farmer can make any money,” he said. “Unless a man has 75 or 100 acres of corn or soybeans, he can’t make any money. One of the big crops here some time ago was potatoes, but insects ruined the crops and many of the people were forced off their land. Cucumbers helped take up the slack and the farmers around here like it fine.”

Last season, 15,000 bushels of cucumbers went through Slade’s station. In all, there were about 115 acres planted—next year they expect an additional 85 acres to come under contract.

Slade had a small patch of cucumbers behind his house. His children helped him tend it. The novelty of the crop was evident at harvest time. Slade cautioned the children at the outset about picking cucumbers that were too small. His final

remark was, “Call me before you pull it.” This was a mistake, as Slade later found out. The children spread out all over the field and were calling him from every direction at once. “This’n all right daddy?” Junior asked. “Wait a minute, Junior,” Slade answered. “yeah, he’s all right, pull it.” “I found a nice’n, see daddy?” yells Rickey. “Don’t step on the vines—pick the big ones,” Slade kept repeating. A year of experience will put a little oil into the operation—next year Slade’s harvest won’t be quite as hard on him.

This program was perfect for these two communities. Cucumbers, because they cannot be picked mechanically, are generally small acreage crops. Because they must be picked at least every other day, a large work force is required. It’s a small-farm, large-family operation. In Moncure, for example, the two Womble families took care of three acres; the Furchee family had one acre; the Harrington family planted one acre; the Ruth family also planted an acre, and the list goes on through the Lee’s, the Horton’s and many others.

The cucumber program was an obvious success in Moncure and Pantego. Next year it should be even bigger. There is some talk of even adding other commodities—maybe strawberries or tomatoes.

Cucumbers gave the people of these communities hope—it provided money when they really needed it—not a hand-out, but fair compensation for their labor. Another point—the money came from outside the community. It wasn’t merely a case of switching cash from one hand to another and back. Although the cucumber program has not conquered poverty here, it has pulled a few of poverty’s whetted fangs.

Agent Bryant (right) had a busy grading shed during harvest.



A little oil keeps Agent Slade’s grader running smoothly.



CONSUMER AND MARKETING BRIEFS

Selected short items on C&MS activities in consumer protection, marketing services, market regulation, and consumer food programs.

SAUERKRAUT INDUSTRY TESTS NEW PRODUCTS

The sauerkraut industry, which last year packed more than 200 million pounds of its product, is seeking new customers to expand its sales beyond the hard core of kraut eaters whose numbers change little from year to year.

Recognizing that what is eaten by young people today affects what will be purchased tomorrow, the National Kraut Packers Association is stepping up efforts to introduce a product that appeals to new customers, particularly young people.

A New Products Committee has been dubbed *New Profits Committee*. The Committee recently told vegetable marketing specialists of the Consumer and Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that a target product is one that doesn't *taste, smell, or look* like kraut and appeals to people who don't like kraut. The Committee said a product meeting these specifications will "open the door to new customers for the kraut industry."

Some products that have been tested by taste panels but are not yet on the market include: pineapple kraut, kraut salad with pimentos and sweet pickles, kraut with tomato chunks in vegetable oil, cheese-flavored kraut, a sweetsour kraut salad mix with mayonnaise, and a kraut with red hot pepper. Some of the sweet flavored products, says the Committee, appeal more to young people than do products that have a sour flavor.

14 BILLION EGGS GRADED IN 1965

More than 14 billion eggs were graded for quality under Federal Standards during 1965 by Federal and State graders. Many of these eggs carried their U.S. grade on the carton, as a guide to shoppers.

PLENTIFUL FOODS FOR JANUARY

Pecans, from this year's king-size crop of more than 264 million pounds, head the Consumer & Marketing Service's list of plentiful foods for the month of January. The new crop, now being harvested, runs 52% larger than the 1964 crop and 30% above average.

Nine other popular foods also are on the list. They include apples, oranges and orange products, grapefruit, grapes, and red tart cherries. And cabbage, split peas, potatoes and onions wind up the plentiful foods list for January.

This year's big apple crop is estimated at nearly 136½ million bushels. While that's slightly below last year's crop, it's 11% above average.

California's very large crop of grapes was a record-breaking 3.9 million tons — and storage holdings are a third more than in the Autumn of 1964. Production of oranges is expected to be greater than a year ago in all producing areas. Grapefruit is on the plentiful foods list also, with Florida's 24 million boxes of seedless grapefruit the largest since 1961. Supplies of red tart cherries are also abundant.

Such household favorites as cabbage, potatoes and split peas, too, await holiday food shoppers.

124 NEW LICENSES ISSUED UNDER WAREHOUSE ACT

During the 1965 fiscal year the Transportation and Warehouse Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service issued 124 new licenses and 401 amended licenses under the U.S. Warehouse Act. Licensed cotton warehouse capacity rose from 14,600,000 bales to 15,560,000 bales. Licensed grain capacity went up from 1.358 billion bushels to 1.412 billion bushels during this period.

During the year the warehouse examination work for non federally licensed warehouses storing Commodity Credit Corporation commodities was consolidated in the Transportation and Warehouse Division with the U.S. Warehouse Act program. Significant economies are expected from the consolidation which permits more flexible use of manpower and other benefits.

In its transportation work, the Division gave significant assistance to producers of agricultural commodities. Evidence on 102 separate actions was presented before rate bureaus and transportation regulatory bodies, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission. Reduced rates obtained through these efforts helped to hold down marketing costs for producers and encourage wider domestic and export movements of agricultural products, particularly grain.

48 F&V MARKETING PROGRAMS COVER A \$1¼ BILLION CROP

Forty-eight Federal marketing agreement and order programs were in effect at the end of 1965, covering fruit, vegetable, potato, and nut crops produced in 33 States.

Value of these commodities covered climbed to \$1¼ billion.

During 1965, several industries sought assistance of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service in developing new marketing agreement and order programs, as well as amending existing programs. New programs issued during 1965 were a marketing agreement to regulate quality of peanuts moving into marketing channels, as well as marketing agreements and orders regulating quality of California olives and Northwest Bartlett pears, and volume of Florida celery and also grapefruit produced in Florida's interior production area.

Marketing agreement and order programs are developed by fruit, vegetable, and nut industries, with assistance of C&MS marketing specialists. They are

operated through actions by administrative committees made up of growers and handlers nominated by each industry and appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. C&MS' Fruit and Vegetable Division supervises administration of each program.

Most of the programs regulate the quality of commodities marketed, to avoid the price-depressing effects of low quality products. Some regulate the quantity of commodities marketed and a few regulate *both* quantity and quality.

Included in some of the programs are provisions to regulate packs and types and sizes of containers, to bring about more uniformity in shipments. Many programs also include provisions for establishing research and development projects aimed at improving marketing of the products.

1.3 MILLION CARLOTS OF FRESH PRODUCE EXAMINED IN 1965

More than 1.3 million carlots of fresh fruits, vegetables and peanuts were examined for quality, condition, or both during 1965 by the Federal-State Inspection Service. Inspection of raw products for processing was up 36 percent from last year, and the volume of farmers' stock peanuts inspected reached an all-time high of more than 100,000 carlots.

3.4 BILLION LBS. OF FROZEN PRODUCE GRADED IN 1965

USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service graded 3.4 billion pounds of frozen fruits and vegetables during 1965. This is equal to more than 75 percent of the total pack, and a half-billion pounds more than in 1964. Grading of canned products also was up 20 percent, to 225 million cases.

17% OF CREAMERY BUTTER CARRIED U.S. GRADE SHIELD

About 17 percent of the creamery butter produced in the U.S. during 1965 carried the U.S. grade shield on the carton, attesting to its quality.

QUOTES

—On C&MS Programs

Federal agencies will continue to call on the Consumer Advisory Council for expert and timely advice...

—To improve consumer education in the Nation's schools;

—to meet the information needs of modern day consumers; and

—to take a fresh look at how adequately the Federal Government is equipped to serve and protect the consumer interest.

... **President**

Lyndon B. Johnson

Basically, the formation of the Consumer and Marketing Service reflects not only the increasing orientation of the Department of Agriculture to the service of *people*—particularly in their role as users of farm products—but also it reflects recognition that the marketing of farm products has become a major area of food and farm policy.

... **C&MS Administrator**
S. R. Smith

We have a problem in getting understanding that the "farm problem" and "farm policy" and the work of the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) are not something remote and apart from the lives of all our citizens.

People need to know that these are matters which affect their standard of living, our strength as a nation, and, indeed, our relationships with the rest of the world. They need to know that involved are flesh-and-blood issues of how the Nation's farm resources may best be utilized in the service of 195 million citizens.

The public has a vital stake in these matters—and should bring its influence to bear on the decisions of policy that will affect the kind of agriculture and the kind of food services we are to have in our Nation in years to come.

... **Deputy Assistant
Secretary of Agriculture**
Trienah Meyers

MEAT TIPS

—From meat inspectors of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service

A manufacturer wishing to place a 12-ounce carton of sliced bacon on the retail market was required by USDA to place the net weight statement in a larger size of print than normal on the label. This was done to point out significantly to the consumer that the carton does not contain one pound of bacon, a common weight of such packages.

* * *

To avoid the possibility of confusing consumers, the Consumer and Marketing Service rejected the use of a tango-colored semi-transparent bag to cover the cut section of a smoked ham. It was decided that such a bag—if it covered the cut surface of the meat—could give a false impression of the color of the ham, and the relation of fat to lean.

* * *

Federal meat inspectors not only continually inspect the contents of a meat product, but also the type of packaging. For example, a red-colored foil coating material used on the inner side of frozen meat food dinner trays passed various laboratory tests before it was approved for use. However, in actual use, an inspector noticed that the red coating was flaking and its use was stopped immediately.

* * *

Federal meat inspectors perform various on-the-job tests before approving packaging materials. A transparent orange ink proposed for use on bacon wrappers was rejected because examination of test strips, after they were immersed in vegetable oil and lard, revealed that the ink had disintegrated. Therefore, the ink could not be used with a fatty product such as bacon.

MEAT AND POULTRY LABELS PROTECT CONSUMERS

By Dr. J. C. deHoll

AERICAN CONSUMERS are being admonished more and more to "read the label" on the food they buy.

This is good advice! But, as one young housewife lamented recently, "I can read the labels until I'm blue in the face and still not know what I'll get for my money."

This housewife's plea is representative of many. Faced with choosing between thousands of food products with bright labels—designed by experts to attract her attention—she can rarely do more than read the product name and attempt to compare price and net contents of competing brands.

Yet, there is more to the label than bright colors. In the case of federally inspected processed meat and poultry products—and this includes all such products shipped across State lines—specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service check each label before the product can be marketed to insure that the label is accurate.

By knowing what each part of a label represents, our young housewife can get more for her money.

Let's dissect a label into six parts—the product name; the pictorial representation; the list of ingredients; the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or person for whom the product is prepared; the statement of quantity; and—most important—the mark of the Federal inspection.

Product Name

The product name must clearly describe the finished product.

For instance, if frankfurters are labeled "all beef," only meat from beef animals can be used. Federal regulations do not even permit the use of scraps of cut-off beef fat or other beef by-products in "all beef" franks.

In contrast, franks labeled as "all meat" can be a combination of meats such as beef, pork, and mutton. If frankfurters contain cereals, however, they can't be labeled either as "all beef" or "all meat," but must be labeled as "frankfurters," "cereal added."

Luncheon meats also demonstrate the care given to the naming of meat products. They must be made only from the type of meat named, whether it be beef, pork, or poultry. Products such as bologna and salami have definite specifications which must be met under Federal inspection.

Names such as "luncheon loaf" are generally used on products which—while completely wholesome—usually contain greater quantities of cereals and water than is permitted in products labeled as "luncheon meat."

If a meat or poultry product has been prepared by freezing, salting, curing, smoking, drying, cooking, chopping or similar method, either the product name must clearly identify the processing, or the method of processing must be indicated on the label. For instance, the term "hamburger" clearly indicates ground meat, but steaks made from ground meat must be labeled as "chopped and formed."

List of Ingredients

Products made from two or more ingredients must be labeled with a list of ingredients. The ingredients must be listed by their common name, in the order of their predominance—that is, the ingredient weighing the most must be first, on down to the item weighing the least.

This list of ingredients is considered part of the name of the product when such terms as "meat food product," "imitation," "loaf," or "spread" are used, and must be clearly shown near the product name.

Federal inspectors check the ingredients to assure consumers that enough meat or meat product is used to qualify the name of the product.

For example, "chili con carne" must contain 40 percent meat computed on the weight of the fresh meat, whereas "chili con carne with beans" contains a minimum of 25 percent meat. Likewise, "vegetables with beef" contain a minimum of 20 percent meat, while "vegetables and beef" must contain at least 35 percent meat. Meat stews and frozen meat and poultry pies all must contain at least 25 percent meat

to be named as such.

The word "spice" may be used to identify one or more natural spices; "cereal" designates one or more flours derived from cereal grains; and "flavoring" identifies certain spice extracts or essential oils.

Federal inspectors examine seasonings and spices to check for any adulteration or foreign materials. The protein content of the spice is also checked to insure accuracy in calculating the overall protein content of the product.

Pictorial Representation

The pictorial representation or "vignette" must accurately represent the contents. For example if a label shows six slices of turkey, there must be six slices inside, for the amount of meat shown in the illustration must agree with the actual contents.

Some manufacturers picture their products as they would appear after preparation, but such labels must be marked "suggested serving" or "serve as illustrated."

Transparent packaging for meat and poultry products should not be of such a color or design as to be misleading or deceptive. For instance, red lines or designs would not be permitted on cellophane covering bacon or pork sausage, to avoid giving a false impression of leanness.

Firm Name

The name and address of the manufacturer or packer must appear on the label. If the address on the package is where the product is prepared, this must be explained—such as "general offices of," or "prepared for," when the product is not prepared by the firm named on the label.

No statement, word, picture, or design that gives a false impression of the origin of the product can be used on the label. References to geographical locations—including words such as "farm," "country," or "ranch"—must be qualified by indicating the locality.

Further, if it's an imported product, the name of the country of origin must be shown as part of the product name.

Quantity of Contents

The weight of the product must be conspicuously shown on the label. It must be the actual weight, and cannot include the weight of the package or container.

With only a few exceptions—such as meat in natural juices, or products mixed with gravy or sauces—the stated weight on red meat products represents the “drained weight” or the weight of the product minus any liquid used only for packing such as water or brine.

Federal inspectors make random tests of actual products during processing to insure that the correct amount of product is in each container.

Mark of Inspection

The USDA mark of inspection must appear on the label of all meat and poultry products processed by firms which sell across State lines or to foreign countries. Included in the mark is the number of the packing or processing plant where the product was inspected.

Before labels are approved for use on meat and poultry products, they must be submitted to C&MS for examination. In the case of some processed products, the label and the formula, method of manufacture, and sample of the product must be submitted.

C&MS labeling specialists check each part of the label for accuracy and conformance with Federal regulations. In addition, home economists may check the contents to insure that they conform to the label and also to make sure the cooking instructions are accurate.

Thus, when you see the familiar round mark, “U.S. Inspected and Passed by Department of Agriculture,” and the poultry mark “Inspected For Wholesomeness,” you can be sure that the product is wholesome and the label is truthful. You’ll know, also, that the meat and poultry used in products bearing the Federal inspection stamp has been thoroughly inspected—before, during, and after slaughter—by highly-trained Federal inspectors, and is clean and safe for human consumption.

Likewise, you are assured that the product was processed and prepared under the careful supervision of these Federal meat and poultry inspectors—as part of the consumer protection provided by USDA’s Consumer and Marketing Service to the American public.

(The author is Chief Staff Officer, Labels and Standards Staff, Meat Inspection Division, C&MS.)

USDA INSPECTS RECORD AMOUNT OF POULTRY AND MEAT IN FISCAL 1965

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in its ever-growing role as a protector of the American consumer, inspected a record quantity of more than 60 billion pounds of poultry and meat products during fiscal year 1965.

Federal poultry and meat inspection laws—administered by the USDA’s Consumer and Marketing Service—require thorough inspection of all fresh poultry, fresh meats, and poultry and meat food products that are shipped across State lines or in foreign trade. Consumers are assured that such products moving in interstate commerce are wholesome, are prepared and handled in a sanitary manner, and are properly labeled.

Under the impetus of the President’s program of cutting costs of operating Federal programs, C&MS increased the productivity of its nearly 2,000 poultry inspectors by 3.2 percent during the fiscal year. This increased efficiency allowed the inspection service to operate with 58 fewer man-years, avoiding a potential half a million dollars in added costs.

In order to protect the consumer from untruthful and misleading poultry and meat product labels, the C&MS inspection services also reviewed more than 68,300 new and revised labels during the past fiscal year. Of those reviewed, more than 5,500 were returned for modification so the consumer would not be misled.

Increased use by the American consumer of convenience foods was reflected during the past year, by increased C&MS inspection of cut-up and processed poultry products. Inspection of cut-up poultry increased almost 16 percent over 1964, while inspection of processed poultry products jumped 12.5 percent.

The growth of the meat inspection program is illustrated by the fact that 49.1 billion pounds of meat and meat products were inspected in fiscal 1965, compared with the 1964 total of 48.6 billion pounds.

Meat inspection service was carried out in 1,775 meat packing establishments located in 743 cities and towns throughout the United States. This was an increase of about 100 meat packing plants over 1964.

A record number of 1,947 blueprints for meat and poultry processing plant construction and renovation was approved by C&MS, including plans for

230 new meat packing plants.

A valuable “back-stop” to meat inspectors and poultry inspectors in the field was the work done by laboratory specialists in the 10 meat or poultry inspection laboratories. These specialists made more than 246,000 tests to provide the inspectors with scientific analysis upon which to base decisions to assure consumers of the wholesomeness of meat and poultry products.

14,000 INTERVIEWS A DAY

Federal-State market news reporters interview some 14,000 buyers and sellers each day to gather price and supply information on farm commodities. This market news is then relayed across the country to help farmers and other marketers make the most efficient marketing decisions.

95% OF FROZEN ORANGE JUICE GETS CONTINUOUS INSPECTION

More than 95 percent of the frozen concentrated orange juice produced in the United States is packed under continuous inspection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, whose Consumer and Marketing Service is on duty whenever the plant is in operation. C&MS inspectors check sanitation, processing and final quality, to help assure consumers of a high-quality product.

HANDLING LIVESTOCK CLAIMS

(from page 7)

And, of course, there’s always the chance that your claim will be settled long before you ever get to the formal complaint stage.

There are currently more than 16,000 livestock dealers and market agencies operating under the jurisdiction of the P&S Act. You could do business with any of thousands of them every year—and never lose a dime. But if you do suffer a financial loss as a result of “anything done or omitted to be done” by them, one possible means of recovery is as close at hand as the nearest P&S Division Area Office.

If you don’t know the location of the P&S office that serves your area, or if you’d like further information on filing your claim, write the Packers and Stockyards Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

(The author is Chief of the Stockyards Branch, Packers and Stockyards Division, Consumer and Marketing Service.)

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The Romance of the Hamburger

If there's one thing school kids like, it's hamburgers. Surveys conducted by the School Lunch Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service show that hamburger is one of the most popular items on school lunch menus and has been for several years.

The popularity of the hamburgers at school has probably influenced children's choice of after-school snacks and after-the-ball-game treats. The rise in consumption of hamburger at school has a parallel in overall consumption of beef in the country. In 1951 Americans averaged 53 pounds of beef per person. By 1964 this had grown to 100 pounds per person.

Schools now spend about 37.5 per cent of their meat dollar on ground beef alone. (Figures include schools offering any type of lunch program.)

What's behind this "romance" story of kids and hamburger? It might help to go back to 1953 when USDA began to buy large amounts of ground beef not only to reduce a beef surplus and help a depressed cattle market, but also to provide improved lunches for millions of the Nation's school children. For many school lunch employees (cooks, dietitians; etc.) as well as some children, this was an introduction to wholesome, appetizing hamburger.

USDA began buying hamburgers for schools in 1953. Now schools spend 37.5% of their meat dollar on ground beef.

One important factor in hamburger's popularity with both students and school lunch administrators is the care which C&MS takes to insure a nutritious, wholesome and flavorful hamburger.

Hamburger can be only as good as the beef going into it. Because of the wide variation in beef, there is also a possibility for a wide variation in the quality of hamburger.

USDA realized that the specifications for buying ground beef would have to be drawn up very carefully. For this reason specifications for ground beef purchased directly by USDA and distributed free to schools under the National School Lunch Program cover virtually every step involved—from the selection of the cuts and carcasses to the final packaging of the product. (Large quantities of ground beef are also purchased locally by school lunch administrators.) Every step is a safeguard to guarantee that the hamburger served school children under this program is wholesome and nutritious from State to State.

Before the beef is even made into hamburger it is examined by C&MS personnel—usually a Federal meat grader—for quality grade, freshness, and to see that only specific cuts of meat are used. Then the grinding is supervised—fat and lean pieces are also watched so that the final mixture will be relatively uniform to insure an equal distribution of fat and lean.

Before the meat is ground, the grader checks the machines for size of grinding plates and sanitation. During the grinding, he watches to make sure that the temperature of the meat stays below 50°F. He also takes random samples to use in making a fat content analysis.

This analysis is a chemical test made on each lot to assure that the ground beef has enough fat to make it juicy and

flavorful, but not so much that it will be wasteful. The fat content of each lot of ground beef must stay within a relatively narrow range to meet USDA's specifications.

After grinding, the meat is ready to be packed. The size of the packages as well as the packaging materials and the process of packing and sealing are checked by C&MS employees.

The close supervision does not end here. The shipping containers are also checked for proper marking, net weight, and condition. Even the actual freezing of the ground beef is checked. Only when he is satisfied that all the specification requirements have been filled will the grader put the stamp of acceptance on the boxes of ground beef. The stamp is an assurance that everything possible has been done to maintain the quality of the hamburger.

With this much care and work going into USDA purchases of ground beef, is it any wonder school kids love hamburgers?

This student's happy face reflects popularity of hamburger with the school-age set.



